

homeowners have access to federal disaster benefits.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1684, the Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017.

This bill directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide technical assistance to Common Interest Communities to ensure they are eligible to apply for public assistance.

H.R. 1684 also instructs FEMA to provide legislative proposals to Congress in order to make condominiums and housing cooperatives eligible for disaster assistance in the future.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1684 addresses an outstanding issue many Americans face in the aftermath of natural disasters because they are ineligible for FEMA assistance based on the type of home they live in.

The glaring discrepancy and inequity in FEMA's policy were revealed as communities struggled to recover and rebuild from the ravaging effects of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

In addition to causing the deaths of 72 U.S. citizens, Hurricane Sandy was the second-costliest hurricane in United States history, destroying 651,000 housing units in New York and New Jersey and exacting a staggering \$19 billion in damages for New York City alone.

However, due to FEMA's unfair policy towards community associations, thousands of New Yorkers found themselves ineligible for federal recovery assistance needed to repair their homes because under current federal law, condominiums, housing cooperatives, and homeowners associations are classified as businesses.

H.R. 1684 corrects this unfairness by authorizing FEMA to provide direct disaster relief to these communities in the form of technical assistance and monetary reimbursements.

Further, the legislation directs FEMA to submit to Congress within 90 days of enactment a plan to make common areas of condos and co-ops eligible for disaster assistance.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is particularly beneficial to my congressional district since Houston ranks among the most disaster-prone cities in the country.

Many of my constituents can recall with horror the devastating effects of Hurricane Ike in 2008, which killed 37 people and destroyed 100,000 homes in Texas.

Over the course of this massive natural disaster, FEMA played a vital role in responding to the needs of impacted areas and victims.

Unfortunately, FEMA's response to Hurricane Ike was also beset by a lack of clear communication between appointed officials and regional emergency managers on the ground.

Improving federal policy for disaster relief is a bipartisan issue and H.R. 1684 is endorsed by the Community Associations Institute, a leading membership organization with more than 34,000 members and 70 chapters nationwide.

Madam Speaker, legislation like H.R. 1684 is crucial to ensuring that all Americans receive the relief and assistance they deserve in the wake of natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy that destroy lives and leave local economies in tatters.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1684.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1684, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACTIVE DUTY VOLUNTARY ACQUISITION OF NECESSARY CREDENTIALS FOR EMPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2258) to require that certain standards for commercial driver's licenses applicable to former members of the armed services or reserves also apply to current members of the armed services or reserves, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2258

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Active Duty Voluntary Acquisition of Necessary Credentials for Employment Act" or the "ADVANCE Act".

SEC. 2. COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE STANDARDS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS.

Section 31305(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "VETERAN OPERATORS" and inserting "SERVICE MEMBERS, RESERVISTS, AND VETERANS";

(2) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking "subparagraph (A) during" and inserting "subparagraph (A)—

"(i) while serving in the armed forces or reserve components; and

"(ii) during"; and

(3) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting "current or" before "former" each place the term appears.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2258.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or FAST Act, authorized the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

to exempt veterans from certain requirements in order to obtain a commercial driver's license if they had qualified experience while serving in the armed services or Reserve components.

H.R. 2258 would extend this exemption to individuals who are currently serving in either the armed services or Reserve components.

This is a bipartisan bill that will help current members of the armed services or Reserve components find employment in the private sector.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2258, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2258, as amended, which will allow current servicemembers who have military experience operating commercial motor vehicles to more easily obtain a commercial driver's license.

In 2015, Congress included a provision in the FAST Act to allow States to waive the written CDL knowledge test for drivers with military commercial motor vehicle driving experience, but it restricts the waiver to former members of the military. There are a significant number of current reservists and members of the National Guard with military commercial motor vehicle experience who could benefit from the waiver. This legislation allows them to more easily use the skills they learned serving our country to earn a decent wage and feed their families.

These servicemen and servicewomen receive from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or FMCSA, what they describe as thorough and comprehensive training, including many hours of behind-the-wheel training—something that we have long advocated for as a requirement for civilian drivers. There is a shortage of commercial truck drivers, and these well-trained military drivers are exactly the type of individuals that we would want to help enter the trucking profession.

Using its existing exemption authority, FMCSA has already taken action to make current servicemembers eligible for the knowledge test waiver on a temporary basis. Last October, FMCSA issued an exemption that allows States to waive the CDL knowledge test for trained military truck drivers, whether they are current members of the military or veterans.

FMCSA cited the fact that training these drivers receive in the military includes "many hours of classroom training, practical skills training, and on-the-road training that are essential for safe driving." However, FMCSA's temporary exemption expires in October 2018. This bill would make permanent the ability for current members of the military to utilize the FAST Act waiver.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I urge its adoption.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR), my good friend.

Mr. AGUILAR. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Active Duty Voluntary Acquisition of Necessary Credentials for Employment Act, or the ADVANCE Act.

The ADVANCE Act will allow Active Duty servicemembers, reservists, and National Guardsmen the same unique testing standards for commercial driver's licenses granted to veterans by the latest surface transportation bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, the FAST Act.

The FAST Act allows veterans with qualifying experience to be exempt from State knowledge-based tests when obtaining commercial driver's licenses. The ADVANCE Act would extend this exemption to Active Duty servicemembers, reservists, and National Guardsmen.

I introduced the ADVANCE Act to ensure that Active Duty servicemembers and reservists have access to the same benefits as veterans, helping to smooth their transition from military to civilian life. We owe it to our brave men and women to help them find work here at home.

This bipartisan bill is a commonsense measure that will create opportunities for servicemembers to find work in their communities by simplifying how they translate the driving skills they learned in the military to American jobs across this country. According to the Department of Transportation, the ADVANCE Act can help nearly 75,000 Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guardsmen throughout the United States.

This legislation comes at a critical time. According to the American Trucking Associations, there is an estimated 40,000 truck driver shortage nationally. The American Trucking Associations has endorsed the ADVANCE Act because it will help put servicemembers back to work here at home and it will allow us to close a troubling skills gap in our local communities.

The ADVANCE Act has also been endorsed by the Association of the United States Navy and The Retired Enlisted Association. It was unanimously passed out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and has strong bipartisan support.

Additionally, Senators Cornyn and Warren have introduced a bipartisan companion bill in the Senate.

I urge my colleagues to join me today and support this bill so we can make this commonsense change to ensure that all current and former members of the military with specialized training can more easily access the licenses they need to get good-paying jobs as they transition to civilian life.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Mr. AGUILAR, who is the author of this bill, for his work in filling this hole so that members of the National Guard and reservists, indeed, are more easily able to obtain a commercial driver's license based on exactly the kind of training that the armed services gives.

It is certainly true that we have had trouble in committee getting on-the-job training as a requirement.

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Here, we have people who get on-the-job training, and on-the-job training of just the kind that our country needs, because of the shortage Mr. AGUILAR spoke of in commercial drivers, a very difficult job that necessitates long hours, often away from one's own home and family.

Madam Speaker, I regard this bill as a twin of the very first bill that we passed, the VA bill that allows the Veterans Administration to offer physical examinations, when we were alerted that there were only 25 physicians there who could do that.

So this is a good pairing of bills that our country needs because of the shortage of commercial drivers, and that we owe our veterans and those who serve, even now, in our services. I am particularly pleased that this is a jobs bill. It seems to me that it is clear that when we enable more and more people to drive commercial trucks, we are increasing the supply of jobs available in our country.

These are high-paying jobs for good reason, because they are difficult jobs, so I think this bill and our first bill are bills that the bipartisan House today can take special pride in.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, with that, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GRAVES of Missouri) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2258, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COAST GUARD IMPROVEMENT AND REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1726) to amend title 14, United States Code, to improve the organization of such title and to incorporate certain transfers and modifications into such title, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1726

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Coast Guard Improvement and Reform Act of 2017”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—REORGANIZATION OF TITLE 14, UNITED STATES CODE

Sec. 101. Initial matter.
Sec. 102. Subtitle I.
Sec. 103. Chapter 1.
Sec. 104. Chapter 3.
Sec. 105. Chapter 5.
Sec. 106. Chapter 7.
Sec. 107. Chapter 9.
Sec. 108. Chapter 11.
Sec. 109. Subtitle II.
Sec. 110. Chapter 19.
Sec. 111. Part II.
Sec. 112. Chapter 21.
Sec. 113. Chapter 23.
Sec. 114. Chapter 25.
Sec. 115. Part III.
Sec. 116. Chapter 27.
Sec. 117. Chapter 29.
Sec. 118. Subtitle III and chapter 37.
Sec. 119. Chapter 39.
Sec. 120. Chapter 41.
Sec. 121. Subtitle IV and chapter 49.
Sec. 122. Chapter 51.
Sec. 123. References.
Sec. 124. Rule of construction.

TITLE II—TRANSFERS AND MODIFICATIONS

Sec. 201. Amendments to title 14, United States Code, as amended by title I of this Act.
Sec. 202. Primary duties.
Sec. 203. Regattas and marine parades.
Sec. 204. Regulation of vessels in territorial waters of United States.
Sec. 205. National maritime transportation advisory committees.
Sec. 206. Clothing at time of discharge for good of service.

TITLE I—REORGANIZATION OF TITLE 14, UNITED STATES CODE

SEC. 101. INITIAL MATTER.

Title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking the title designation, the title heading, and the table of parts at the beginning and inserting the following:

“TITLE 14—COAST GUARD

“Subtitle	Sec.
“I. Establishment, Powers, Duties, and Administration	101
“II. Personnel	1901
“III. Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary	3701
“IV. Coast Guard Authorizations and Reports to Congress	4901”.

SEC. 102. SUBTITLE I.

Part I of title 14, United States Code, is amended by striking the part designation, the part heading, and the table of chapters at the beginning and inserting the following: